

The argument vpon the fyrst

Fol. r. v.

Epistle of thapostle. S. Iohn by Erasmus
of Rotterdame.



That this is Saincte Iohn thapostles epistle, whiche wrote the Gospell, the very title of the wordes selfe is a playne argument. He maketh muche a booe in the reherfall of lighte and darkenes life and deathe here and loue, in often repeatinge the wordes, as though they were taken out of the sayinge nexte before. Of the whiche foster to open up saying more plainly by example) this is one: Lone not the vworlde, neither those thinges that are in the vworlde. Yf any manne loue the vworlde, the lone of the father is not in hym, for all that is in the vworlde etc. And anon after: He is not of the father, but of the vworlde: and the vworlde passeth awaye. How often here is the wordes repeated & finally in all his sayinge there is little compendious shortnes, and more open plainesse than in the writinge of the reste of thapostles. And as for the epistle, it is more evidently plaine, than nedeth any argument, like as the two Epistles folowinge are, whiche are ascribed to one Iohn a certayne senior, and not to Iohn the apostle.

Thus endeth the Argumente.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon on the firste Epistle of Sainct Iohn.

The fyrste Chapter.

That which was from the beginning, which we haue herd, which we haue seene with our eyes, which we haue toke vpon, and our handes haue handled, of the worde of the lyte and the lyte apperes, and we haue seene and heare witnes, and shewe vnto you that eternall life, which was with the father, and appered vnto vs. That whiche we haue seene and hearde, heretofore we haue told you, that ye also maye haue felowshipp with vs, and that oure felowshipp maye be with the father and his sonne Iesus Christ. And thus a lyte we shewe vnto you, that ye maye receyue, and that youre lope maye be full.

The tenth.



I write not vnto you, dearely beloued brethren, of senter or meane thinges, or of thinges vknownen, but of a newe matter: howbeit so newe vnto vs, that with God it was from euertlasting. This is the worde of God, euen Iesus Christe bothe God and manne: whiche where he was alwayes the sonne of God, woulde of late be the sonne of a mayden: and which after hys diuine nature was vuisible to mans eyes, vouchesafed to take vpon hym an humayne boode: and did vouchesafe to be familiarly conuersaunt among men, that he might carye vs vp from the darkenes of our ignorance to the light of Gospellike

The paraphrast of Erasmus vpon the .I. epistle

pellike knowlage: and that we might begynne to beholde him with the eyes of our minde, whome we haue prescripte sine with the eyes of our bodye. In to be the vnderste of mannes harte required, that the trithe shoulde bee credited by grosse outward experienties: but yet the goodnes of them is more perfect to by his owne wordes, whiche where they nerther had sene him with theyr eyes, he handled him with theyr handes, yet were most certainly perswaded and beleued that he is the sonne of God, and thonly auer of mannes saluacion. It is our parte therfore, to declare that, whiche we haue most certainly proued by our bodily senses, vnto those that chanced not to see it, and yet it is expedient to beleue, that none ought to trust to haue life, nor euerslasting saluacion, but he that beleueth the Gospelles doctrine, wherof we are both witnessis and preachers. It is not the worde of manne, neither of light importancer, but it is the worde of God, and of heauen, that geueth euerslasting life to them, which geue euerient hearyng vnto it and belucting from the deathe of sinnes, from what so euer religyon, from what so euer kynde of life they shall sene them selues vnto it. Of this matter & we speake of we speake of most assured credence, & is to wete, euen the thing which we & were continual waitours heard with our eares law with our eyes, neither sawe we asatte of, or passinge by, but we looked presently on to the full. And to cause a thinge to be credited, there are two principall chief senses, and if that also bee but a small matter, we did not only heare hym teaching, prayinge, commaunding wyndes and deuilles, and the father sondry tymes bearing witness vnto the sonne, and we sawe hym not only worke myracles, suffre deathe and rye agayne: but also we haue handled with these handes of oures. For whan he was rye agayne from deathe, to shewente to make vs beleue absolutely that he was no wayne phantasie, but euen the same manne aloue agayne, whome we had sene before dead, he caused vs to handle him with our handes, and laping to our fingers he shewed vs the places of his woundes. Whan kynde was dead, bycause it was in thialdome of vices and synnes: and he suffred deathe for our wickednes, that through his goodnesse we myght spue vnto Innocence. We were in doubt also our selues, whan we sawe hym dead, whan we sawe hym buried, but whan he rose agayn from deathe, he gaue vs sure hope of life. Whan kynde had had no manner of hope of eternall life, except he had caused vs to see him with our eyes, and if he had not plucked awaye all doubtfulness fro vs, by most manifestly apparent experienties. He beinge manne suffred paynes for our synnes, and the same beinge God dooeth feely geue immortall life to them that put theyr saythfull trust in hym. He lyued alwayes with the father, and this life was alwayes determinately purposed for vs by the sonne, howbeit this counsaile was not yet published vnto the world, albeit the nation of the Jewes (and yet none but they) looked for it by the prophetes oracles, as it were in a dyaime. In the meane while deathe reigned, life laye hydden. Some fixed theyr hope in sholes, some in worldly wisdom, but the saluacion and life of all people was Iesus Christe, the worde of God the father, the teacher of Innocency, and the geuer of Immortalitie. For none lyueth, but he that lyueth godly, neither dooeth any escape deathe, but he that attayneth Immortalitie. At length thus (Iesus christe) manifested him selfe vnto the world by hym selfe, shewing him selfe playnly to all the senses of man, and so thrusting him selfe in to the consciences of menne. And therfore he would haue vs to be lookers on and witnesses of all chenges, that he did on earth, to thintents

chintent they might be faithfully published by our preaching throughout all the whole vniuersall world: that like as we by Iesus haue obteyned lyfe and saluation, in case we perseuer still in the Gospelles doctrine, such so shoulde you also come with vs in to the felowshyppe and company of this saluation, in case you geue credence to our witness bearing, concerning the thinge that you neither hearde nor sawe of hym, but learn it by our preaching. We are neither dayne witnesses ne yet vncommaunded. He bad vs to bee faithfull witnesses, and we recorde vnto all men with the greates daunger of our head, none othes thinge than we haue most euydent experience of, with all the sentes of the bodye. We are happye, in that our eyes and eares haue made vs beleue, and yet you are neuertheless happye, if you geue credence vnto hys witness bearers. Our faithe hathe giued vs vnto Christe, and made vs the children of God and members of Christe: And your faith also shall engraft you vnto the same bodye, that beinge ioyned with vs in the felowshyppe of faith, you might make one bodye. And so shall it come to passe, that we shall not only bee all of one mynde amonge our selues, as the members of one bodye, but we shall also haue peace and league with Iesus Christe, and by hym with God hys father, from whome we were before farre different: that like as the sonne is at mostt perfitte constant a communion of all thinges with the father, such so we also by perfitte agreement of the profession of the Gospell shoulde bee heaped together in to one bodye of Christe, to be made partakers of all the goodes of our brade. I knowe you are ioyous of so happye a felowshyp, but yet I put you in remembraunce agayne of these thinges in writinge, to chynce you might exioyce more fully, if euery manne be not all together ioyous of hys owne saluation, but all mens felicitie make euery one glab. For thys dooth christen charitie cause, that euery manne must be as glab of othes mennys comodities, as of his owne. The more that this felicitie is commune vnto, the more abundaunt shall euery ones ioye bee. Amonge vs there shall no bringe of one mynde stande together substantially, excepte we be fast giued together with mutuall charitie. We canne not possibly haue peace with God, except we be answerably like vnto our head Iesus Christe: what so euer he hathe, he ascribeth it vnto the father: and what so euer we haue, it becometh vs to ascriue it vnto Christe. Christe is the true lycht that procedeth from the father of all lycht. We canne not bee the members of Christe except we bee bright: neither canne we haue lycht, onles we bee transformed into him, and continue stedfastly vnto the ende in his felowshyp. Truth and Innocence is the lycht of the mynde, and synne and mychell luffes are the darkenes: where lycht is, there is life: where darkenes is, there death is.

And this is the synginge which we haue hearde of hym and beate vnto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkenes at all. I haue said, that we haue felowshyp with him, and walke in darkness, we lye, and do not the truth. But you yf we walke in light such as he is in lycht, then haue we felowshyp with him, and the blood of Iesus Christe has cleansed vs from all synne. If we saye that we haue no synne, we deceiue our selues, and the truth is not in vs. If we knowe our synnes, he is faithfull and iust to forgie our synnes, and to cleanse vs from all vniuersall synnes. If we say, we haue not synnes, we make hym a liar, and by synne is not in vs.

the xxij.

What is the matter then, whiche we write vnto you, that you might the more fully reioyce? In deed it is that, whiche we haue heard euen of him, and hauing

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hauing heard it we make it comen vnto you: that God, forasmuch as he is all together and of his own nature good, all wise, all pure, and all light a life, rather is ther any darkenes in him. In vs the matter standeth not after such sort, but we haue muche darkenes euen of our selues: in case we haue any light, we are enobred in that all together vnto him, by whose free liberality we are deliuered from our olde synnes, and being deliuered from the darkenes of our former ignorance we haue learned by the Gospelles doctrine to liue goodly after Chyiste our heaues example. If any manne boast, that he is through baptisme engraffed to the body of Chyiste, and hath therby felowshyppe with God the father: where as in the meane while he liueth yet in error, a vicer of his former lyfe, dooeth playnly lye. For seeing (as I sayed before) God is farre from all manner fellowship of darkenes: how can he possibly haue any thynge a doo with hym, that lyueth yet still all together in error and olde vices? For he is cleare out of the waye, that thinketh he can attayne Innocencie by any other means than by Chyist: agayne he is deceaued, that thinketh it ynough for him to be washed in baptisme, except he be answerably like vnto his professid through Innocencie of life: he that thinketh thus, is deceaued, and beliet that sayeth it. For Chyiste is the tructh, whiche hath nothing a doo with lyen. The lyfte steppe vnto light, is for a manne to acknowlage his darkenes: and the lyfte steppe for the of a manne vnto Innocencie, is to acknowlage his synnes. Will ye heare therfore, by what token we maye knowe, that we haue true felowshyppe with God? Doubtles euen by this: if like as he is light, and vnder of all darkenes, euen so shall we absteine after his example from the darkenes of all errors and vices, frampng all our conuersion after the light of the Gospel: and yf like as the sonne hath most high conuerde with the father: euen so shoulde we also lyue Innocently and be all of one mynde amonge our selues. The father will not lape the transgressions of our olde lyfe vnto our charge, whiche are enies doone awaye all the sorte of them by the precious blood of his sonne Iesu Chyiste, so that we from henceforthe absteine from all synne, as muche as in vs lyeth. The blood of Chyiste hath washed awaye all tythynnes, and hath washed it awaye from all folkes: yea but he hath washed none but those that acknowlage theyr fautes. If we saye that we are not endawngered with synne, we becaue our selues, we lyue in error, we wauble in darkenes: and Chyiste, whiche is light, whiche is tructh, is not in vs. For if he were truly in vs in dede, he woulde dispatche awaye this darkenes of arrogant ignorance. And if it shall chaunce vs after receyving of baptisme, to lyde backe agayne through mannes weaknes in to any synne, and as it were a miste obscure our light: we entiste beware, that arrogancie withdraue vs not farther and farther of, and lince vs agayne from light in to our olde darkenes. Yea we muste geue diligence, that through discrete sobrynes we maye be admooned vnto the light that shall dispatche awaye all darknes. If the brother perchance doe trespass agaynst the brother, let rather forgive other his trespass, that God maye forgive them also the trespasses that are done agaynst him. For in dede God hath vpon this condicion promysed to forgive vs, what so euer we haue offended agaynst him, if we forgive our brothers fault: and extendeth bys debte (euen to the bittermoste farthinge) of him, whiche hauing bys lynde inextingull vnto him, shewd him selfe smallly mercifull towards his felows letman: that as to saye, he iudgeth him by his owne the merce of God whiche he once frely forgave

forgive him all his trespasses, that will not pardone a smale offence unto
 hym, agaynst whome he eyther trespasseth every daye, or elles maye tres-
 passe. That man wyl easily forgive hym that trespasseth agaynst hym,
 whiche wyl remembre howe many wayes he offendeth both agaynst God
 and agaynst his neyghbour: And as it is a very hard mattee for a man to
 do so as he offende in nothing, even so is it a verie easye mattee to amende
 suche offences with forgiving one an other. Forgive thou thy neighbour,
 and thy neyghbour shall forgive thee agayne: and God shall, even as it
 were of very couenaunt, forgive you both. I speake of those faulces, that
 chaunce even among them that are good, yea but among men: and those
 faulces, that obscure the lyght of the Gospelles veritie, rather than extin-
 guish it. For God forbiddeth, that man laughte, or whoore doine, or sacri-
 lege shoulde chaunce upon their life, that are ones chosen among the chyl-
 dren of God. There is nothing that allureth more the mercie of God, and
 swagereth his wyl, than yf a man acknowlege his faulte to God. If he
 that is a ferece cruel man forgive him that acknowlagereth his faulte, how
 muche more shall God do so, which is more mercifull than any man: he is
 by nature readyly bent unto mercie, and hath promised vs forgiveness by
 on this condicion: *forgeue, and it shalbe forgiven vnto you.* If he would not for-
 geue, in that he is good: yet he shuld forgive because he is full of faithfull
 credence. See that thou accomplishe the prescribed condicion, and he shal
 not forget his couenaunt. If we with our whole harte forgive our neigh-
 bour that offendeth vs, God shall also forgive vs, nor onely one synne or
 an other, but all synnes: so that we to our powers geue diligence, that we
 may be once boyde of all bieses. And yf we be not able fully to attayne unto
 that for the frailtie of mannes body, yet he of his liberal free goodnes shal
 make good, that is wantynge in our strengthes, and shall cleanse vs from
 all our offences, who perchance suffereth some tokens of our olde forged
 lyfe to remayne still in vs, for this purpose, that we shoulde acknowlege our
 worskenes. For in dede he is better content with a sinner that misliketh him-
 selfe, than with a righteous that ma standeth in his own conceite. He would
 that þ saluacion of men shoulde be ascribed vnto his mercy, and not to our
 merities. And nowe harthe he testified, that there is no mortall manne on
 yearth, but he offendeth in some thyng. And yf we wyl say, that we haue no
 synne in vs, we make woe a lyar, and say agaynst hym: and he that sayeth
 sayeth hym selfe muche woe.

The. ii. Chapter.

My litle children, these thynges hope I unto you, that ye synne not. And yf any manne
 haue an advocate with the father, Iesus Christ the righteous, he it is that obte-
 neth grace for our synnes: not for our synnes onely, but also for the synnes of all the world. And
 hereby we are sure that we know hym, yf we kepe his commaundementes. He that sayeth, I
 knowe hym, and keepeth not his commaundementes, is a lyar, and the veritie is not in hym.
 But whoso keepeth his word, in hym is the love of God perfect: in dede hereby we knowe that
 we are in hym. He that sayeth, he knoweth hym, ought to walke as he walketh.



Best thynges do I wyte, my lytle chyldren, not that synne should be comitted the more licenciously vpon cruce of the mercede that is obtained, but that no man should synne at all, as muche as in vs lyeth. After that Christ hath once forgiven vs all oure transgressions, it is requisite for vs to applie al our studious endeoures to this ende, that we may kepe innocencie undefiled. And yet if it chaunce vs to slide backe agayne into any synne, ther is no cause why we should despayre of forgiveness, we haue God freetenable, & with hym we haue a louing patron & a trusty, who being the sonne, obeyeth wharsoeuer he wyll of the father, and witheth hartely woe into vs: which gaue himselfe to saue vs, so that we do betterly and from the bo:ome of our heartes mislike our felus, and geue our diligence agayne to better. He alone hath nothing to be pardoneth of, and he it is that maketh in reccellion for the synnes of his members, and reconcilerh the father, whiche is offended, vnto vs, and caueth hym to bee mercifull vnto vs: a not vnto vs onely, which haue now embraced his doctrine, but also vnto all mankynde vniuersally, yf they with a syncre hearte confesse their synnes to be sinners, and purpose to leade an innocent lyfe, and so purpose to go on forward, and kepe it substantially. For baptisme doeth not make vs free from the obseruation of Moses law for that purpose, that we should synne afterwarde licenciously without punishment, but that we should more firmly stycke to the loue of the Gospel, whiche causeth more to bee done of the wyllinge, than so many lawes of Moses gette perforce of the cōstrayned. He comanded many thynges in a final towne, that comanded men to loue their neighbours, euen as he byd vs. He bitheth not vs to loue hym agayne, but he enticeth vs, he prouoketh vs, he kindeleth vs, whosofer knoweth God aright, cannot choise but loue hym behemently. For every one that professeth God with his mouche, knoweth not God: but he that is kindled with the flame of gospellye charitie, and doeth wyllinglye and gladly, that whiche he byd perfectly before, that we do good euen vnto our enemies, and that for the saluacion of our neyghbour we wyll not stycke to stand in daunger of our life, he declareth hym selfe to knowe God. But as if a man make his boaste, that he knoweth God, in that, that he bringe taught his principles hath learned the miseries of the earth, in that bringe baptised he hath professed his name, neither for al that foloweth the example of his charitie, he is a lyar, neither hath he yet fully learned to knowe God, in as muche as God is not knowne, excepte saythe be garnished with charitie. And whosofer is a lyar, Christ whiche is the verye truth selfe, dwellerh not in hym: and whosofer hath not Christ dwelling in hym, is not a liuely membre of his body. Faith without loue is a bayne matter and a drabe. To bee hoist, lone is not idle, it omitteth none of those thynges, that it knoweth be acceptable vnto hym who is loueth. Christ sayd he would not acknowlage hym to be his disciple, that would not take vp his crosse and folow hym, walkyng in þe foresteppes of perfyre charitie. Therfore he that obserueth his saying, declareth in dede that he holpeth fast the perfyre and right euangelical charitie. By trial herof we shal knowe, that we are in his body, & that we haue receyued his spirit. Wherto doest þu make thy vaunt, as a member of Christ, in that thou art through baptism receyued into the flock of christians? It is not an idle professiō, it is a not fleting professiō.

It is not the profession that maketh a true member of Christe, but the imitation. He that professeth with his mouth that he is regenerate in Christ, must walke in his foote steps. He lyued not to him selfe, he died not for himselfe: he gaue himselfe wholly for vs, he dyd good to all folkes, he gaue no reuylinge worde agayne to any man, but whan he was nayed on the crosse, he prayed to the father for them that spake reuylingly agaynst him. This is the gospellike and perfite charitie, whiche they ought to followe in their dedes, that professe them selues to be Christes disciples.

Wherfore, I write no newe commaundement vnto you but that olde commaundement, which ye haue had from the beginning. The olde commaundement is the worde, which ye haue heard from the beginning. Agayne, a newe commaundement I write vnto you, that is true in hym, and the same is true also in you: for the darkenes is past, and the true lighte nowe shyneth. He that saith here that he is in the light, and yet hateth his brother, is in darkenes even vntill this tyme. He that loueth his brother, abydeth in the light, and there is none occasion of euill in him. He that hateth his brother, is in darkenes, and walketh in darkenes: and can not tell whether he goeth, because that darkenes hath blinded his eyes.

Dearely beloued, this commaundement of charite, that I wyte vnto you, is no newe commaundement, but euen Moses lawe declared it long agoe, or rather Christe by it, whiche renewed his commaundement in the gospel: and so renewed it, that he made it peculiarly his owne. This (quod he) is my commaundement, that you shoulde loue one another, as I haue loued you. Therefore it is neither any newe commaundement, neither my commaundement, that I geue now vnto you, ne yet suche a one as you haue not heard of hitherto, but it is the selfe same commaundement, that we gaue vnto you by and by in the begynnyng by shewtyng of Christe. And yet agayne the same is newe that I write now vnto you. It was an olde commaundement, but it is brought out of vse through the manners of the people. The Jewes learned by heart: Thou shalt loue the Lorde thy god, thou shalt loue thy neighbour, but yet every one serued his own gaue. Christ renewed this vnto vs, yea and loued vs more than himselfe, and he loued not his neighbours, but he loued his enemies, yea those that turned waywardly from him and that were worthy of euill. This albeit I knowe you haue heard of, long agoe, yet it ought to be renewed from tyme to tyme with often rehearsal, that it maye sticke the more depely in youre mynde, scing it is the chief matter of the gospels profession. This was a true commaundement in Christ, which performed in dede the thyng that he taught: but it was not true in you, as long as you hated your neighbour, as long as you recompensed euill worde for euill worde, and wrong for wrong. But now it is true in you also, synce the true sprong up lighte of the gospels doctrine hath dispatched awaye & darkenes of your former life, & hath taught that none is acceptable, but he that would loue the good for Christes sake, & loue the also that are bad to this ende, that they should be conuerted vnto Christ. Those that folowe this doctrine, walke in lighte, & offende not in the darkenes of euill lustes. The hate of the neighbour pouereth darkenes into the mynde. Therefore he that is so washd and so hath professed Christ, that he geueth not ouer to hate his brother, he is deceaued in beleuynge that he walketh in light, where he is yet in darkenes. For God reuisteth not him, & forgaueth not his brother. For it is not ynoughe to haue geuen ouer these, whoredom & murdre, in baptisme, except al hallowhartednes be also plucked quite out of & mynde, & in steede of hate, charitie come in place.

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He that conuinceth still in the loue of his neyghbour, abydeeth in lighte, which is Christ Iesus, and stumblcth not as walking in darknes: for true charite is so farre of from hurrying any body, that it suffreth all thynges, and turneth all thynges into good. Contrarywyse he that hateth his brother, although he haue geuen ouer to offer vnto images, although he haue geue ouer to be an vsurour or a churche robber, yet he is still in darknes, & seruing his owne blinde lustes he walketh in darknes: neyther seeth he the strayght waye vnto saluacion, although the gospel shyne clearely vpon him. And all is long of the darknes of the hate of his brother, that hath so blinded his eyes. And here hath reignerth, there is the iudgement blinde.

The text.

Fathers, I write vnto you howe that your sinnes are forgiven you for his names sake. I write vnto you farther, howe that you haue knowen him that is from the beginning. I write vnto you yongmen, howe that ye haue overcome the wicked. I write vnto you lytle children, howe that ye haue knowen the father. I haue written vnto you farther, howe that ye haue knowen him that is from the beginning. I haue written vnto you yonge men, howe that ye are strong, and the worde of god abydeeth in you, and ye haue overcome the wicked. And that ye loue not the world, neither the thynges that are in the world. If any man loue the world, the loue of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, as the lust of the fleshe, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the father, but of the world. And the world passeth awaye, and the lust thereof: but he that fulfilleth the will of God, abydeeth for euer.

I loue you euen as a mother loueth her children, and write for that purpose, partly reioycyng at your felicitie, partly exhortyng you to goe forward better and better. I reioyce at you, as my most deare children, whom I haue begotten agayne by the seede of the gospels doctrine vnto Christ, in that the synnes of your former lyfe are pardoned you, and freely pardoned you, for none other cause, but because you haue professed the name of the lord Iesu Christ, that you shoulde also remembre after his example freely to forgie euery one his neyghbour. I write vnto you, whom not so muche the proesse of age as the grauitie of maners and godly carefulnesse so wardeth them that be yonger, boeth make worthy the name of fathers: reioycing in you, that you are not onely endued with a commune maner of wisdom, wherby olde men are commended almost because of the experience of thynges, and geue the better counsel to the ignorant yong folkes, but in that you haue reknowledged Iesus Christe the auroi of saluacion: whiche not onely is of a greate olde age, but also hath bene alwayes with the father. You being of great age knowe him that is eternal: and the more fully you knowe him, so much the more diligently you preache him to them that be of slenderer age. Olde folkes do remembre and kepe in mynde many olde auncient thynges, and you kepe him in mynde that was before all age. I write vnto you yongmen which through the strength of faith haue overcome that wicked & vncilly Satan. The commune sorte of yongmen thinketh themselves happie in that they geue lightly place to no mā because of their bodyly strength. But you are more happie, that by reason of your strength of mynd, you could be overcome, neither with enticementes of holuptuous pleasures, ne with any terroures of this world. Other mens aciuities flourish in barrail, but your actiuitie hath flourished more nobly against the assaults of deuils, the fleshe, & the world. I write vnto you childre, which although for tendernes of your yeares, you are not skilled as yet in this knowlage of worldly matters, yet you haue already attained the thig, & getteth you euerlastig felicitie. In other childre it is this special toke of wit, if they acknowledge

their father, but you knowe your heavenly father, by whom you are regenerate vnto heauen. Let every one maynteyne that he hath, and increase in that he hath. For this cause sake, I bothe reioyce in euery one, and also warne all and euery orders and states of you, that acknowledging your felicitie, you geue thanks to God your autour, and hauing in remembrance, whither you must go, please alwayes forwarde vnto more perfection. I wil rehearse it vnto you therefore, that ye can not forget it. I haue written vnto you fathers, for you knowe him which hath neyther beginning nor ending, that the desyre of this lyfe should in no wise steepe you, trying you make haste to the life that neuer shal haue ende. I haue written vnto you yongmen, because you haue overcome the ruffinge nyctenete of yowth through the balliaunt strengthe of mynde, and because you haue with a constaunt heart kepte the worde of the Gospell, and haue by the helpe of Christ, overcome the Deuill the continuall enemye of mankynde. Continue you still in victorie, contemne still that whiche you haue hitherto contemned, and loue more and more that you haue begon to loue. The worlde enticeth by false imaginacions of transitorye goodes, and frayeth with a bayne and false shewe of euilles. As for you, let those thinges fraye you whiche are euill in dede, and neuer haue ende. And let those thinges catche you that are good in dede and knowe none ende. Followe the lyght of the gospell and loue heauenly thynges, whiche the heauenly father promyseth, vnto whom you are regenerate by Christ. Flee the darkness of naughty lusses, wherby this worlde layeth bayte with countrefaict goodes. It can not possiblie be, that you can loue bothe at ones, nor serue both at ones. There is no agreement betwene God and the worlde, there is no concorde betwene lyght and darknes: whosoener loueth the worlde, smothereth from the loue of God the father. I speake not of this worlde, which god made, wherin we liue, wil we nil we. The wiked greedy desires of bayne thinges (wherin the common sort of menne repose their felicitie, forgetting the thinges that are truly good in dede) I cal the worlde. It is not the place, howe farre of so euer it be, nor the raynente, nor the meate, nor the title, that exempteth you fro the worlde, but a mind that is pure fro those desires þat I spake of. And what hath this worlde, that is not not so much hurtful? There are thre thinges, þat it most chesely deceiueth foliyshe a vnder suspect forkes withall: the voluptuous pleasure of the fleshe, enticementes of the eyes, and hygh statelynes and proude galaunnes of lyfe. For it objecteth certayne suggings of bayne pleasures to clawe the senses of the bodye withall for a tyme, that the mynde maye in the meane while be called awaye from the studie of heauenly good thynges. For the desyre of suche manner of good thynges, the heauenly spirite suggesteth, whom God the father geueth vnto his childre that are truly regenerate by Christ. The deuill hath also a spirite of his owne, by whom he suggesteth a pernicious loue of thynges neyther true nor durable, vnto them that haue bene themselves thoroughly vnto this worlde. He suggesteth the naughty desires of lechery, so vile the members of the bodye withall through a foliyshe and a filthy itching desire. He suggesteth the desire of synne meates a drinke to please þat paunch & the mouth. He suggesteth the sweetness of idleness & slepe, that the mynde may waxe the more sluggish through the custome.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the .i. Epistle

He suggesteth wanton songes and chameles fables, to annoynt the eares withall. He suggesteth the wanton enticementes of beautes and sondy kyndes of thynges to beholde, to delite the eyes withall. He suggesteth the pompes and ioyfull of riches, the occasions of ambition. Finally he allureth mennes myndes on euery parte awaye from the true and euerclasting good thynges, vnto the vayne imaginations of good thynges. Let him that is entangled with the desire of these thynges, knowe that he is not moued by the spirite of the heauenly father, but by the spirite of the worlde. The worlde, lyke as it considereth vpon elementes that endure but for a tyme, euen so geueth it nothing but that which shall shortly perishe. God, like as he is eternall, euen so geueth he freely euerclasting rewardes. Therefore he that dependeth vpon the succours of the worlde, foloweth a certayne felicitie that is both vayne and shall shortly be taken awaye, which, euen casually that cometh vnto thought vpon, plucketh awaye in this worlde, or at least age dispatcheth it. Truly, death that shall come vnto euery man, plucketh quite awaye as the dreame of false pleasures. When the matter is taken awaye, the pleasure perisbeth, and sorowes come in place. When the man is taken awaye, as is gone to naught, and euerclasting torment cometh in place. But he that obedieth vnto the father that calleth him vnto the loue of an heauenly lyfe, his felicitie shall neuer haue ende. For he that geueth it, knoweth none ende. The vnhurtfull commodities of this worlde are to be vsed for the tyme, yea but smallye, but moderately, to the necessitie of nature, not to the voluptuous' fulfylling of pleasure. But the chiefe aduise of mynde ought to be turned to the thynges that be eternall, wherunto the vse of all other thynges ought also to be referred.

The text.

Epistle children, it is the last tyme: and as ye haue hearde hitherto that Antichrist shall come, euen now are there many begonne to be Antichristes also: whereby we knowe, that it is the last tyme. They went out from vs, but they were not of vs. For if they had bene of vs they would haue continued with vs. But that it might appere, that they were not of vs. Therefore, ye haue an ornament of him that is holy, and ye knowe all thynges. I haue not written vnto you, as though ye knewe not the truth: but as though ye knewe it, and knowe also, that no lyf cometh of trouth. Who is a lyfe, but he that denieth that Iesus is Christus? the cometh Antichrist, that denieth the father and the sonne. Whosoever denieth the sonne, the same hath not the father, he that knoweth not the sonne, hath the father also. Let therefore aduise in you that same which ye heare from the begynnyng.

The felicitie of godly men doeth not yet appeare, but it shall be manifestly opened in the commyng of our Lorde Iesu Christ. The wicked seme to lyue in the meane tyme sweetly here in this worlde, but euerclasting sorow shall haue nether over them and that shortly. For the last tyme cometh to be present, wherein (the course of thynges being turned bysye downe,) those shall rayne with Christ that are tormented now for Christs sake: and they shall be brought to naught, which be now rebelles agaynst Christ. You haue hearde that Antichrist shall come, who being armed with all the mayntenance and iugglinges of this worlde, shoulde kepe warre agaynst Christ, and by and by when Antichrist is overcome agayne, the body of Christ shall be deliuered from all euils, and the members of the deuill shall be laden with the burthens of all euilles. Therefore the commyng of this Antichrist, (of whom the Apostles tolde you before) cometh not to be farre

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The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the first Epistle

the first, the other the second, the third the third, the fourth the fourth, the fifth the fifth, the sixth the sixth, the seventh the seventh, the eighth the eighth, the ninth the ninth, the tenth the tenth, the eleventh the eleventh, the twelfth the twelfth, the thirteenth the thirteenth, the fourteenth the fourteenth, the fifteenth the fifteenth, the sixteenth the sixteenth, the seventeenth the seventeenth, the eighteenth the eighteenth, the nineteenth the nineteenth, the twentieth the twentieth, the twenty-first the twenty-first, the twenty-second the twenty-second, the twenty-third the twenty-third, the twenty-fourth the twenty-fourth, the twenty-fifth the twenty-fifth, the twenty-sixth the twenty-sixth, the twenty-seventh the twenty-seventh, the twenty-eighth the twenty-eighth, the twenty-ninth the twenty-ninth, the thirtieth the thirtieth, the thirty-first the thirty-first, the thirty-second the thirty-second, the thirty-third the thirty-third, the thirty-fourth the thirty-fourth, the thirty-fifth the thirty-fifth, the thirty-sixth the thirty-sixth, the thirty-seventh the thirty-seventh, the thirty-eighth the thirty-eighth, the thirty-ninth the thirty-ninth, the fortieth the fortieth, the forty-first the forty-first, the forty-second the forty-second, the forty-third the forty-third, the forty-fourth the forty-fourth, the forty-fifth the forty-fifth, the forty-sixth the forty-sixth, the forty-seventh the forty-seventh, the forty-eighth the forty-eighth, the forty-ninth the forty-ninth, the fiftieth the fiftieth, the fifty-first the fifty-first, the fifty-second the fifty-second, the fifty-third the fifty-third, the fifty-fourth the fifty-fourth, the fifty-fifth the fifty-fifth, the fifty-sixth the fifty-sixth, the fifty-seventh the fifty-seventh, the fifty-eighth the fifty-eighth, the fifty-ninth the fifty-ninth, the sixtieth the sixtieth, the sixty-first the sixty-first, the sixty-second the sixty-second, the sixty-third the sixty-third, the sixty-fourth the sixty-fourth, the sixty-fifth the sixty-fifth, the sixty-sixth the sixty-sixth, the sixty-seventh the sixty-seventh, the sixty-eighth the sixty-eighth, the sixty-ninth the sixty-ninth, the seventieth the seventieth, the seventy-first the seventy-first, the seventy-second the seventy-second, the seventy-third the seventy-third, the seventy-fourth the seventy-fourth, the seventy-fifth the seventy-fifth, the seventy-sixth the seventy-sixth, the seventy-seventh the seventy-seventh, the seventy-eighth the seventy-eighth, the seventy-ninth the seventy-ninth, the eightieth the eightieth, the eighty-first the eighty-first, the eighty-second the eighty-second, the eighty-third the eighty-third, the eighty-fourth the eighty-fourth, the eighty-fifth the eighty-fifth, the eighty-sixth the eighty-sixth, the eighty-seventh the eighty-seventh, the eighty-eighth the eighty-eighth, the eighty-ninth the eighty-ninth, the ninetieth the ninetieth, the ninety-first the ninety-first, the ninety-second the ninety-second, the ninety-third the ninety-third, the ninety-fourth the ninety-fourth, the ninety-fifth the ninety-fifth, the ninety-sixth the ninety-sixth, the ninety-seventh the ninety-seventh, the ninety-eighth the ninety-eighth, the ninety-ninth the ninety-ninth, the hundredth the hundredth.

The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the first epistle

[illegible]

heard from the beginning that ye should love one another

[illegible]

[illegible]

The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the first epistle

Thou hast professed brotherly love, and if thou have a truly pious mind, the holy Ghost will testify in this case, when thy brother is pained with sin, & thou called him brother, and then thou no count of brotherly affection.

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[illegible][illegible]

The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the first epistle

[illegible]

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you.

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The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Bible

[illegible]

[illegible]

The .b.chapter.

[illegible]

for there are three in heauen, that beare recorde vnto Christ, the father, the worde, and the spirite: the father, whiche sending once and restones a voice downe from heauen, testified openly, that he is his dearely beloued sonne, in whom nothing coulde doe amisse: the worde, whiche hauing done so many miracles, whiche in his death and resurrection declared him selfe to be the true Christ, bothe God and man, the peacemaker betwene God and men: the holy gooste, whiche descended vpon his head when he was baptised, and that after his resurrection fell vpon his disciples. And of these three there is all one most perfect agreement: the father is the author, the sonne the messenger, the holy goost the remembraunce. There are three things also on earth, that beare recorde vnto Christ: his humane spirite whiche he put from him on the crosse: the water and the blood, that came out of his syde when he was deade. And these three witnesses doe agree. The other declared him to be God, these recorde that he was man. John also bare witness. And yf we receiue witness of men, it is reason, that the witness of God be of more importance with vs. For the testimonie of God the father is manifest: *This is my wellbeloued sonne, in whom I am pleased, to see him.* Nothar thing can be spoken more plainly or more fully: he that belieueth truly in goddes sonne Iesus Christ, and hath reposed at the succours of his life in him, so that trusting in his promises he continueth all things, that this worde can make a shew of, whether they be amiable or dreadfull, beare a witness in him selfe, and beareth witness vnto the sonne of God. For when (through the inspiration of the spirite of Christ) he belieueth euen deathes for his loue, he beareth no triling witness vnto me, that they are no vaine things that Christ hath taught and promised. He that trusteth not in God, but putteth his trust in the worde, he, as muche as in him is, maketh God a lyer, whiche hath promised felicitie vnto them that would beherd vnto his sonne Iesu Christ: where as he in his conuersation teacheth that felicitie is to be asked of the worde, & cleaueth so vnto the comodities of this life, as though nothing of a man remayned after the deathe of the bodye. The father saith: *Hear him.* And his life, that belieueth not, saith: *Hear the worde.* For when the sonne prayed the father, that those whiche beherd or should beleue in him, might haue eternall life, the fathers voyce was heard, testifying as by the sound of a tromper, that his prayers should be allowed. The father therfore hath geuen vs euerylasting life, the wing of whome it should be asked, euen of his sonne Iesus Christ. His doctrine who soeuer embraceth, his example whosoever followeth, his promises whosoever trusteth vnto, he bothe possedeth the sonne and hath life: the pledge wherof he kepeth in the meane time, euen the spirite of God, through the vnbondred confidence wherof he is bolde to call God, father: he that is a stranger from the sonne, is estranged also from life.

These things haue I written vnto you that beleeue on the name of the sonne of God, that ye maye knowe, that ye haue eternall life, and that ye maye beleeue on the name of the sonne of God. And this is the trust that we haue in hym: that yf we aske any thing according to his will, he heareth vs. And ye knowe, that he heareth vs whosoever we aske, we knowe, that we haue the petitions, that we desire of hym. If any man see his brother sinne a synne not vnto death, let hym aske, and he shall geue hym life: for them that sinne not vnto death. There is a synne vnto death, for whiche I saye I not that a man should praye. All boughtrauours is sin, and there is a synne not vnto death. We knowe, that whosoever is borne of God, synneth not: but he that is begotten of God, hepereth himselfe, and that wicked teacheth hym not. We knowe, that the act of God, and the worde is all together set on wickednes. We knowe, that the sonne of God is come, and hath geuen vs a myght to knowe hym, whiche is true: and that I saye him that is true, through his sonne Iesus Christ. His sonne is very God, and eternall life. Therefore, kepe your selves from images. Amen.

The Rom.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle

These thinges therfore doe I repecte and beate into you with so many wordes, lest any man shoulde perswade unto you the contrarye. But take it for a sure and undoubted certayntie, that it is true whiche you haue beleue: that euerclastyng lyfe is ordayned for you throughe Iesus Christe, whose soryed felowe heires you are. You haue already the ryght clayme and gage, and shall haue possession of the thyng selfe in hys tyme. Therfore you that beleue in the sonne of God, beleue steadfastly, and put your sure trust in hym daylye more and more. he wyll not fayle you in the promyses of euerclastyng lyfe, that sayeth you not nowe euen in thys lyfe. for in dede the spirite of Christe geueth this confidence vnto you, that whatsoeuer you shal aske in the name of the son, you shoulde obtaine it, if ye aske according to hys wyll, that is, yf you be suche when you come to praye as he woulde haue you to come: that is to saye, pure from all maner hate of your brother. For he obteyneth nothing at goddes hande, of whom his neyghbour obteyneth not forgiveness of his fault: and yf you aske those thynges that are attainable to the lyfe of heauen, and make to the glorie of Christ. O asyles we for the moste parte knowe not what we shoulde aske of God, and many tymes for holosome thynges we desire hurtfull thynges, yf the spirite of Christe put vs not in mynde, what were expedient for vs to aske: but as ofte as we aske after thys sorte, we are sure that god heareth our prayers: we are sure that he wyll frely geue vs whatsoeuer we shall aske. So hath he promised vs, and is hable to performe whatsoeuer he promyseth, and wyll performe whatsoeuer is holosome for vs. Further shall he surely increase his giftes in vs, bring prouoked therunto by our prayers, but also he wyll pardon vs our daylye offences, without whome the feblenes of mans nature can scarcely be hable to endure longe: and he shall not onely pardon every one hys offences, yf he desire pardon, but he shall also heare the brother praying for the brothers offences, so that the remembrance of suche faultes, that it doeth not quench our brotherly loue, although it doe somewhat obscure it. For there is a synne that cannot bee imputed vnto weakenes, nor be healed with lyght and easie remedies: as when a manne vpon a sorte malice persecuteth the chrysten felowshyppe, where he hymselfe hath professed Christe, and in pretence of religion goeth aboute to subuert religio. The desperate frowardnes of suche a one deserueth not the prayer of godly menne: and yet perfite charitie prayeth also for suche, wythyng for those thynges that cannot possiblye be done. There is no manne that prayeth for the deuill, because he doeth wittinglye throughe malice oppongethem, whom God woulde well vnto. Perhappes, no prayer shoulde also be made for them, that are translated into hys affection: and are rather to be shunned, that they doe no harme, than to be releued with prayers, excepte they shewe an hope of their repentance. Suche a disease nedeth more strong remedies, and is greater, than can bee taken away by dayly prayers, wherby lightest offences are taken away, which are done of feble weakenes, & not of purposed frowardnes. Whatsoeuer is committed besyde perfite righteousness, is sin: but there be many differences of synnes. There is some synne, whiche although it be deadlye and blotte innocenpe, yet it breedeth quencheth not our chryistian charitee: as when by occasion doe outthowe a woorde agaynst our frinde, whiche

we

we are soze for by and by that it ouer that by: tohan a sobayne angre hath rusthed out at a worde, that we woulde wythe by and by myghte be called backe agayne: tohan throughte the swetenes of meate or bynke re-creuyng, we take somewhat more then the necessitie of nature doeth require. And to pardon these offences God is easie, yf he be called vpon with mutual prayers. Suche maner of fautes of children, those that be genyill parentes doe for the more parte wythe at, whiche woulde not suffice greater offences. Albeit there is none so lyght a faulte that ought to be neglected. Whatsoeuer is done amysse, is euyl and to be eschewed of godlye folkes, and yf it be neglected, it draweth by lytell and lytell vnto deathe. But lyke as spryde remedy oughte to be had for these lightest offences, whiche men are scarce hable to auoyde: euen so god forbydde, that he whiche hath once renounced the worlde, and dedicated hymselfe vnto god, shoulde be rombled backe agayne into anye greare notable cypine. By promysing of þe gospel we are made the childre of God, and members of Christ. And it is not comenient, that the children should distre so greatly from the father, and the members from the head. Therfore he that throughtlye vnderstandeth, that he is borne of god, taketh more hede that he doe no euyl, than of deathe it selfe: and kepeth hymselfe that he haue nothyng a doe with that naughtie lord (dewill) whom he serued before together with the worlde. Lyke as Christ beynge once dead roste agayne to lyfe, and rose agayne to lyfe neuer to dye any more: euen so he that throughte baptisme is once dead vnto the worlde, and risen agayne to newnes of lyfe with Christ, & is not nere for hym to doe that thyng agayne, for the whyche Christ must dye agayne. Let them be affrayed of the worlde, whiche are not truly borne agayne of god: which haue not with al the pych of their whole heartes receyued the seebe of the gospels doctrine. We knowe, that we are truly of god, whome neyther the euyl thynges nor the good thynges of this world can seporate from Christe. The whole world is set all together on naughtines. Whiche waye soeuer a man turneth hym, there is occasion offered of thynges to rurne vs awaye quite from the innocent bpryghnes of lyfe. But from the worldes enchaunmentes the sonne of god hath once deliuered vs: whiche came into the worlde for this cause, to exempte vs out of the contagious infection of the worlde. He hath dyuen awaye the bakenes of oure former ignorance, and hath geuen vs an vnderstandyng that is lyghtened with the lyght of the gospel: to chynce we should knowe the true god & the free geuer of al righteounes: who onely had no thyng a doe with the worlde: and we are in hym truly, in that we folowe his doctrine and promyses with an bpryght conscience, as longe as we are in his sonne Iesus Christe, whome he sent into the worlde for that intent. He is the true god, whiche onely ought to be honoured: and the true lyfe, whiche onely oughte to be desyred. Lytell chyldren, yf you doo truly knowe the true God, beware of false goddes, and bayne Images, whiche the worlde hath in honoure. He worshyppeth an Idole, that maketh moneye his God. He worshyppeth an Idole, that maketh his belly his God. He worshyppeth an Idole, that for worldelye honoures sake, despyseth the commaundementes of God. There be manye suche kindes

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle

**kyndes of Images. Swearre you of all, yf you will abyde in the worshippe
of the true God. so byche humble prayer of myne be vouchesafe to
make good, by whose goodnes we are deliuered from
oure reuouers. Amen.**

**Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the first
epistle of Sainct Iohn.**